



WOMAN'S AUXILIARY

to the California Medical Association

"You Can Always Recycle a Towel"

This year a new committee for the Woman's Auxiliary to the California Medical Association has been formed on Environmental Health. Its main purpose will be to assist the CMA and its Committee on Environmental Health in plans to alert the public and the medical profession to the invasion of environmental pollutants, and help with methods to use in combating them. In establishing our WACMA committee, one of our biggest problems has been where to begin. In mid-September all State and County Auxiliary officers met in Santa Barbara for the Fall Conference. Mrs. Kenneth McNiece, State Auxiliary President, presided over a series of workshops and meetings that gave ample opportunity for learning and the sharing of ideas.

In September the Woman's Auxiliary to the San Francisco County Medical Society met at the Ecology Center to discuss plans for the purchase and distribution of ecology pamphlets to be placed in doctors' waiting rooms. Lunches for the meeting came "boxed" in dishtowels. "You can always recycle a towel," noted Mrs. Richard Kunin, San Francisco Auxiliary President. Also in September, the Alameda-Contra Costa Auxiliary held a mini-conference with special emphasis on Environmental Health. Mrs. Daniel Black, President of that auxiliary, extended invitations to neighboring counties to share in this general meeting and received enthusiastic replies. In July, Mrs. Frederick Lane, Environmental Health Chairman for Kern County Auxiliary, wrote of the success representatives of the group enjoyed when they spoke before a packed hearing of the County Board of Supervisors. They were instrumental in passing amendments for stronger air pollution controls to tighten regulations on industry, agriculture, and backyard burning. Other auxiliaries have made invaluable contributions through their help in petitioning for stricter air pollution controls. These are but a few examples of ways in which doctors' wives are beginning activities and campaigns for a better environment.

It would be difficult for a new committee to have as its subject matter a more popular set of common concerns. Ecology and all its related aspects have become by-words in our thinking. The contamination of the environment by pollutants is one of the greatest threats to man's health and survival. This growing crisis is world-wide and arises from many sources. Physicians are in a broad sense devoted to the health and welfare of mankind; and we, their wives, take part in their purposes. The challenges of the present to our environmental health demand our leadership and support.

Two areas present targets for our immediate concern:

the control of pollutants such as air pollution, water pollution, land pollution, noise, radiation, chemicals, solid waste disposal, control of disease vectors, aesthetic values; and a study of the problems created by population growth. County Auxiliary planning should include:

1. Conference with County Medical Society to coordinate activities and assist in plans for County participation.
2. Auxiliary meeting with speaker or film on Environmental Health.
3. Evaluation of community programs already in progress on Environmental Health. Encourage community and school participation through field trips, poster contests, ecology seminars, recycling drives, and similar projects.
4. Establishing liaison with various state agencies and other organizations interested in environmental pollution.
5. Assessment of the presence of pollutants in your area and their causes, and the methods of control.
6. Development of techniques to demonstrate to the public (including industry and agriculture) the causes of environmental problems and the urgency for solutions.
7. Carrying the needs of ecological reforms through resourceful and capable Medical Auxiliary members into the community through civic involvement such as PTA, service clubs, and the like.
8. Urging local Auxiliaries to pass resolutions and support legislation to curb pollution.

The Woman's Auxiliary hopes to develop a sustained, continuous educational program on Environmental Health. An informed, aroused and motivated public will not only be heard by its representatives in government, but will become involved in the local community. The Auxiliary feels that the need for immediate action against the growing ecological imbalance is of such importance that this new committee has been formed to give the subject top priority.

Our concern with Environmental Health is linked from community to community, county to county, state to state, nation to nation, around the world. These are problems that belong to each and every one of us. As the elements of pollution do not respect rigid boundaries, the fight for a cleaner environment should not. Too often we are handicapped by the failure of communities that share a common pollution source to get together and mount a common effort to solve the problem.

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